**Port Program Planning Committee Meeting Minutes: June 9, 2011**

**Attendance: Sarah, Susan, Jonathan, Barbara, Krystal, Jenny, Tom, Jeff, Elysa, Erin, Kati**

Susan introduced Kati and Tom which will be working with the group from now on.

Susan mentioned the article about the Charles W. Morgan in the Boston Globe and Australian newspaper. The rest of the group expressed their excitement

Susan next handed out the draft of the port itinerary and explained that it has already been modified. The itinerary is being refined so that there are fewer transit days, more availability to school groups, greater accessibility on weekends, and a larger focus on several key events. **Susan also mentioned that this group should consider if the dockside exhibit and programs should be set up the day before the CWM gets to a port.**

Jenny next discussed several sessions she attended at the AAM annual meeting in Houston, TX. The first session was about the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry’s “Month at the Museum” program.

MSI completed a rather unusual experiment which was the first of its kind in the museum’s 77 year history. “Month at the Museum” was the chance for one person to come and live at the museum around the clock for thirty days viewing every exhibit, taking part in live science demonstrations, meeting the guests, attending galas, and sleeping in some unusual spots around the building like the U505 submarine. Over 1,500 people applied to be the museum’s “roommate” and after a week’s long process it was narrowed down to one. Kate moved in to MSI on October 20, 2010 and moved out on November 18th. Jenny explained that MSI released an advertisement stating, “Museum seeks roommate” to which 1,500 applicants then submitted videos. MSI narrowed the applicants down based on the submission’s creativity and communication skills among other qualifications. Once the pool was narrowed down to about 5 people, finalists went through 5 tests off-site including a photo-shoot, live podcast interview, and dinner with the president of the Museum. The winner was announced at a press conference where each finalist had a beaker in front of them. The finalist then poured a liquid into the beaker- the finalist whose liquid created a reaction in the beaker was the winner. According to MSI, 59% of visitors knew about Kate before coming to the museum through her blog and YouTube presence. Additionally, many parents and teachers reported that she was a role model for younger children. Kate was awarded a $10,000 prize at the end of the month. MSI reported that the total cost for the exhibit was $50,000 but the marketing pay off was tremendous. Krystal reported that Nina Simon wrote that there could have been more science involved but that it was a great marketing tactic.

\*Here is a link to Kate’s blog and other information about the “Month at the Museum” <http://www.msichicago.org/matm/month-at-the-museum/> & MSI is currently calling for applicants for “Month at the Museum 2”

**The group was very eager to have a “Month on the Morgan” with someone similar to Kate onboard for the 38th Voyage.**

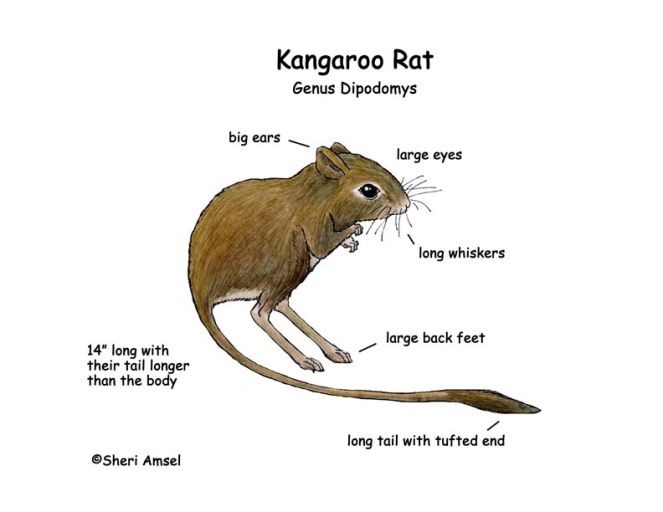
Jenny next discussed a session about the Houston Museum of Natural Science. The Museum had a corpse flower named Lois on display as they waited for it to bloom. The flower is rare in that it usually only blooms once in its lifetime. It is typically a complete mystery as to when it will bloom but when it finally does-it emits a powerful, terrible odor similar to that of a corpse. A blogger and journalist who is not affiliated with the museum in any way created a twitter account: <http://twitter.com/#!/corpzflowrlois> personifying Lois, the corpse flower. The journalist personified Lois as a very sassylady, writing things that are not necessarily appropriate for children. The twitter account ended up receiving a major following and the museum’s visitation jumped from 30 thousand to 80 thousand people. At first the museum was quick to announce they were not connected to the twitter account in any way as the language and posts had upset certain groups of people, such as stay at home mothers. Eventually the Museum realized what it was doing for the museum, drawing big crowds and making Zac, the horticulturist an idol and local celebrity. Visitors flying into Houston were leaving the airport to see Lois and others were consistently coming in to see the changes. As a result, the museum started a webcam, sold merchandise and decided to leave the museum open 24 hours a day so that visitors could come in the middle of the nigh to see Lois (which many visitors did!). Jenny showed the group a button she had received at the session that read, “Team Zac” and told the group that a set of 6 buttons was selling for $25. The museum also reported that there was some break through into science as people felt more comfortable to ask Zac questions and became interested in horticulture.

The group then began brainstorming about these two ideas.

First the group decided that in some ways Mystic Seaport’s twitter and Facebook presence is too formal. The accounts that are fun to read often say things the Museum would not be able to. **It could be beneficial to ask someone to start a separate amusing twitter account around the Charles W. Morgan. This person would be an “outsider” in that it wasn’t a Mystic Seaport Staff member trying too hard to be funny. It should also be a person that has contemporary cultural knowledge- knowing what topics are funny in the news, etc.**

Krystal then explained an idea for a game that had been mentioned in the OLC groups called, “Be the Timber”. **A teacher had suggested that the schools could blog as if the timber was a personality as it traveled to different ports.** Another teacher in the OLC co-creation groups suggested **that actual people on the Morgan could have Facebook pages or twitter accounts bringing their entries in log books to life.** Krystal suggested James Osborne and the logbook for the 1st voyage might be a good place to start.

**Several people then suggested that it might be cute and fun to have a critter personality that “traveled” on the CWM’s 38th Voyage.** Krystal explained that she had been reading about an island in New Zealand that the Morgan sailed to. There is an endangered species of Kangaroo rats on that island. This could be a way to call attention to the species and to create a fun creature to follow on twitter.

Here is a picture of a Kangaroo-Rat (Because everyone is wondering...!) 

Several people suggested the rat might comment on the food the crew was eating toward the last few days of the trip and say “this food is awful- I won’t even eat the crumbs!” Other people suggested that there could be “rat-cam” or a webcam at the level of a rat as it has the unique ability to access all parts of the ship. There could be “inteRATives” including online games or an interactive rat’s nest where visitors could click on different pieces of the nest to see what ports the pieces came from. It would have to be cute and lovable character but also a bit scruffy (similar to that of the characters in the movie “Ratatouille”) Krystal explained that she learned in the co-creation groups that students like to learn about the goory and disgusting things. A character like a rat has the ability to “share” both aspects in a way that would avoid telling a vivid-graphic story about whaling.

Jenny and Krystal presented the Voyage Partner Matrix and additional list of partners that they created (available on the wiki). The matrix bridges port logistics and the visitor experience together. **Some additional pieces of information were suggested to be added such as:**

1. **Cost**
2. **Benefits**
3. **Synergy**
4. **Long-term partnership opportunities**
5. **Evaluation of the partnership**
6. **More qualitative information**

A question was then raised if the CWM was going to sail to Martha’s Vineyard. Susan responded that it is a difficult place to sail to and that the Seaport does not want to take the risk. Martha’s Vineyard will be involved in planning but will not be involved as a port stop. The Alabama and Shenandoah will also be involved.

Everyone in the group then presented their top 5 programs with some explanation.

Elysa: Contributory art project, hands on activities- which could be relooked at for improvements in interpretation, web component- crucial to people coming and the follow-up aspects, wish for the whales, evening programs.

Jonathan: Dockside exhibit, lumped together the arts in artist on board/contributory writing and art project, wish for the whales, and a drama component with a performance piece including music and theatre- this is not specifically on the program list and should be added.

Barbara: Hands on activities- skills of a sailor, dockside exhibit- below deck experience, scavenger hunts- to collaborate with the local communities, 38 ports/ 38 classrooms

Sarah: hands-on tactical experience, wish for the whales, 38 ports/ 38 classrooms, viral marketing- including the personification rat character

Erin: Divided the ideas into categories such as programming, marketing, education, and extra. For programming specifically: Wish for the whales, contributory art project, scavenger hunts, dockside exhibit, hands-on activities, and artist on board.

Jeff: 1. Contributory art and writing project, Hosting a local performance group with a strong following, Morgan photo opps, Accessible dockside/ tactile dockside, and Hands on activities

Jenny: Contributory art project, wish for the whales, contributory writing project, 38 ports/ 38 classrooms, hands on activities, flotilla

Krystal: artist on voyage, wish for whales, partner at port, 38 ports/ 38 classrooms, viral marketing, quest style experience- OLC loves this idea and use examples of the Holocaust Museum and Salem Witch trials

Susan: Contributory art and writing projects, wish for the whales, viral marketing, flat Stanley, scavenger hunts- geocaching

Tom: believes there should be a “leave behind” and a “take away”, contributory art and writing projects, 38 ports/ 38 classrooms, performance arts- “tale of a whaler” or find a scene form an incident on board

Tom also asked, “What is the plan for sharing the original purpose of the ship?” The group responded that this would be done using interpreters and the dockside exhibit component. It will also be the basic information, or content, given in each program that is created. Tom also shared that he had signed his signature in the copper ballast of *the Constitution*. It would be great if the people that visited the Morgan could leave their “mark” in some way or another.

There were several new programs added to the list:

1. Month at the Morgan- Similar to “Month at the Museum” with Kate
2. Williams Mystic Marine Science Class- will be testing samples on the ship from Port to Port
3. Facebook or Twitter account for either the CWM or a created character like the Rat
4. Using QR codes to tell each story
5. Krystal suggested an idea for a “Lights Out” activity in port towns. Mystic Seaport would ask port towns or cities to turn off the lights for a minute or more to remember what it was like without lights. By doing this Mystic Seaport would help in making the town’s connection to the original purpose of the ship- acquiring whale oil for lighting.

After this idea Susan explained the local community celebrations that will take place during the week of Monday, October 31 through Sunday, November 6. There will be restaurant deals, fireworks, free admission to the museum (over the weekend) and other festivities to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the CWM coming to Mystic and the announcement of the public phase of fundraising. The theme will be the 1940’s and restaurants and stores may have price points such as $19.41 to symbolize the CWM’s 70th anniversary. During this week the Local Community Group, who are organizing the festivities, were hoping to recreate the lantern in the foxel of the CWM to sell as a fundraiser. They were hoping to have everyone in the historic Mystic area keep the lantern lit on their porches. Susan suggested that they might be able to use the “Lights off” idea with the lanterns on.

1. Webcam- whether on the mast, on Bill Sheer, or having the “Month on the Morgan” person video tape happenings on the Morgan.

Kati suggested a revival of the webcam in the ship yard in November

1. High school podcast interviews with Japanese “Research” vessels, Greenpeace, Norwegian “Research” vessels, Indigenous communities (New Bedford Whaling Museum has connections to a whaling community in Alaska). These would be comparative interviews investigating the current state of whaling.
2. Signal Flags Demo using the signals described on the last page of the 1st log book. (More information to follow)
3. Visitors could leave their “mark” or signature on the CWM some where
4. “Bread Crumb Trail of the Morgan’s 38th Voyage” The Morgan could pick up 4 objects in New London- 1 object would go to New Bedford, 1 would go to Newport, 1 would go to Boston and 1 would come back to Mystic. This could be done in each port so that the ports were strung together and a trail was left from the journey.
5. Continue “Earn your Sea Legs” programs in each port
6. Performance aspect such as Tale of a Whaler

**Lastly the group decided that the Program List should be put into categories such as educational, marketing, and programming. Several people suggested there should also be a category for things that are “givens” or things that the group assumed would be done such as a website, and therefore did not appear on their list of top 5 program ideas. Erin will work on this and will also update the list to include the new ideas shared.**

**Also the group decided that we should create a deadline for program choices to be made. Once the programs have been selected Krystal will present our ideas to a co-creation group.**

**The next meeting will be held on June 20, 2011 from 3:30- 5:00PM.**